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5 January 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 157

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/53/L.37 and Add.1)*]

53/27. Bethlehem 2000

The General Assembly,

Recalling the fact that the Palestinian city of Bethlehem is the birthplace of Jesus Christ and one of the most historic and significant sites on earth,

Noting that the world will celebrate in Bethlehem, a city of peace, the onset of the new millennium in a global vision of hope for all peoples,

Stressing the monumental importance of the event for the Palestinian people, for the peoples of the region and for the international community as a whole, as it comprises significant religious, historical and cultural dimensions,

Aware of the Bethlehem 2000 project as a multifaceted undertaking for commemoration of the event, which will begin at Christmas, 1999, and conclude at Easter, 2001,

Aware also of the needed assistance with regard to the above-mentioned project, and expressing appreciation for the steps taken towards increasing the engagement and participation of the international community, including donor countries, and organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, as well as the European Commission, religious institutions and others,

Expressing the need for immediate change in the situation on the ground in the vicinity of Bethlehem, especially with regard to ensuring freedom of movement,

Stressing the need for ensuring free and unhindered access to the holy places in Bethlehem to the faithful of all religions and the citizens of all nationalities,

Expressing the hope for rapid progress in the Middle East peace process and the achievement of the final settlement between the Palestinian and Israeli sides within the agreed time, so that the millennium may be celebrated most appropriately in an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation,

1. *Welcomes* the impending arrival of this global, historic celebration in Bethlehem of the birth of Jesus Christ and the onset of the third millennium as a symbol of the shared hope for peace among all peoples of the world;

2. *Expresses support* for the Bethlehem 2000 project and commends the efforts undertaken by the Palestinian Authority in this regard;

3. *Notes with appreciation* the assistance given by the international community in support of the Bethlehem 2000 project, and calls for increased assistance and engagement by the international community as a whole, including private sector participation, to ensure the success of the Bethlehem 2000 project and the fruition of this monumental commemoration;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to mobilize the pertinent organizations and agencies of the United Nations system to increase their efforts to ensure the success of the Bethlehem 2000 project;

5. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled "Bethlehem 2000" so that the General Assembly may have a renewed opportunity to reaffirm its further support for the event immediately prior to the occasion of its commemoration.

61st plenary meeting
18 November 1998

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A/RES/53/28
5 January 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 37

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/53/L.34 and Add.1)*]

53/28. Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 46/139 of 17 December 1991, 47/92 of 16 December 1992, 48/100 of 20 December 1993, 50/161 of 22 December 1995, 50/227 of 24 May 1996, 51/202 of 17 December 1996 and 52/25 of 26 November 1997,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council decision 1991/230 of 30 May 1991, resolutions 1992/27 of 30 July 1992, 1995/60 of 28 July 1995, 1996/7 of 22 July 1996, 1996/36 of 26 July 1996, 1997/56 of 23 July 1997 and 1998/44 and 1998/46 of 31 July 1998 and agreed conclusions 1995/1 of 28 July 1995, 1996/1 of 26 July 1996 and 1997/1 of 25 July 1997,

1. *Reaffirms* the commitments adopted by heads of State and Government at the World Summit for Social Development, contained in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development[1] and the Programme of Action,[2] and their pledge to give the highest priority to national, regional and international policies and actions for the promotion of social progress, social justice, the betterment of the human condition and social integration, based on full participation by all;

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[1] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

2. *Expresses its profound concern* at the seriousness of the current economic crisis in many regions of the world and of its negative social and economic consequences, demonstrating the necessity to implement fully the commitments made at the Summit, and reaffirms the need to continue to evaluate the impact of structural adjustment programmes by, *inter alia*, integrating the social dimensions involved;

3. *Emphasizes* the urgency of placing the goals of social development as contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action at the centre of economic policy-making, including policies influencing domestic and global market forces and the global economy;

4. *Also emphasizes* the need for revitalized economic and social development everywhere within a framework that places people at the centre of development and aims to meet human needs rapidly and more effectively by, *inter alia*, enhancing positive interaction between economic and social policies, and stresses the need for strong, sustained political will at the national, regional and international levels to invest in people and their well-being in order to achieve the objectives of social development;

5. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development,[3] the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997–2006)[4] and the role of microcredit in the eradication of poverty;[5]

Critical importance of national action and international cooperation for social development

6. *Stresses* that social development and the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Summit are primarily the responsibility of Governments and that strengthened and coordinated international cooperation and assistance are essential for their full implementation;

7. *Reiterates* that international cooperation based on a spirit of partnership and solidarity among all countries contributes to create an enabling environment so as to achieve the goals of social development;

8. *Calls upon* all Governments and the United Nations system to promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective and to use gender analysis as a tool for the integration of a gender dimension into the planning and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes on social development;

9. *Reiterates the call* of the Summit for Governments to assess on a regular basis national progress towards implementing the outcome of the Summit, and encourages Governments to provide information using the Secretary-General's guidelines for national reporting on the progress made and obstacles encountered, in the implementation of the Declaration and the Programme of Action;

10. *Considers* as a positive step towards greater cooperation and strengthened partnership among members of the international community the convening of its high-level meeting on renewal of the

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[3] A/53/211.

[4] A/53/329.

[5] A/53/223 and Add.1.

dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership, held on 17 and 18 September 1998, on the overall theme of "the social and economic impact of globalization and interdependence and their policy implications";

Mobilization of financial resources

11. *Reaffirms* that the mobilization of domestic and international resources for development from all sources is an essential component for the comprehensive and effective implementation of the outcome of the Summit;

12. *Calls upon* all countries to develop economic policies that promote and mobilize domestic savings and attract external resources for productive investment and to seek innovative sources of funding, both public and private, for social programmes, while ensuring their effective utilization, and in the budgetary process, to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of public resources and to give priority to providing and improving basic social services;

13. *Expresses concern* that the volatility of short-term capital flows can have negative consequences for social development, undermining the goals of the Summit and setting back progress in its implementation, in particular in developing countries, and underlines the need to study the ways and means to address the problem;

14. *Reaffirms* that a strong political commitment by the international community is needed to implement strengthened international cooperation for development, including social development, that the mobilization of domestic and international resources for development from all sources is an essential component for the comprehensive and effective implementation of development, that enhanced efforts should be made for the mobilization and provision of new and additional financial resources for the development of developing countries and that, despite an increase in private capital flows, official development assistance remains an essential source of external funding, and notes that developed countries reaffirm the commitments undertaken to fulfil as soon as possible the agreed United Nations targets of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for overall official development assistance and 0.15 per cent of their gross national product for official development assistance for the least developed countries, that donor countries that have met the 0.15 per cent target will seek to undertake to reach 0.20 per cent, and that further efforts are also needed to improve the effectiveness of official development assistance and to focus such aid on the poorest countries;

15. *Also reaffirms* the importance of agreeing on a mutual commitment between interested developed and developing country partners to allocate, on average, 20 per cent of official development assistance and 20 per cent of the national budget, respectively, to basic social programmes;

16. *Calls upon* the international community, including international financial institutions, to implement fully and effectively all initiatives that will contribute to a durable solution to the debt problems of developing countries, in particular African countries and the least developed countries, and thus to support their efforts to achieve social development and, in this context, reaffirms the need to make further progress towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Summit by the Bretton Woods institutions, including the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative;

17. *Recognizes* the necessity of providing appropriate technical cooperation and other forms of assistance to the countries with economies in transition, as set out in the provisions of the Declaration and the Programme of Action;

Involvement of civil society and other actors

18. *Reaffirms* the need for effective partnership and cooperation between Governments and the relevant actors of civil society, the social partners, the major groups as defined in Agenda 21,[6] including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the implementation of and follow-up to the Declaration and the Programme of Action, and for ensuring their involvement in the planning, elaboration, implementation and evaluation of social policies at the national level;

19. *Encourages* non-governmental organizations to continue to participate in the work of the Commission for Social Development, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996 and decisions 1996/315 of 14 November 1996 and 1997/298 of 23 July 1997, and in the implementation process related to the Summit to the maximum extent possible;

The role of the United Nations system

20. *Welcomes* resolution 36/1 adopted by the Commission for Social Development on the priority theme "Promoting social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons" and the agreed conclusions contained therein;[7]

21. *Also welcomes* the ministerial communiqué adopted by the Economic and Social Council at the high-level segment of its substantive session of 1998 on "Market access: developments since the Uruguay Round, implications, opportunities and challenges, in particular for the developing countries and the least developed among them, in the context of globalization and liberalization"[8] and Council decision 1998/298 of 5 August 1998, in which it decided to dedicate the high-level segment of its substantive session of 1999 to "The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women";

22. *Recalls* the session of the Economic and Social Council on integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of major United Nations international conferences and summits, held from 13 to 15 May 1998 and, in this regard, takes note of Council resolution 1998/44, as well as decision 1998/290 of 31 July 1998, entitled "Basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields";

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[6] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

[7] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 6* (E/1998/26–E/CN.5/1998/7), chap. I, sect. B.

[8] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/53/3), chap. IV.

23. *Welcomes* the efforts of funds and programmes in assisting countries in implementing all Summit commitments at the national, regional and international levels;

24. *Also welcomes* the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme in the implementation of Summit commitments aimed at the eradication of poverty, particularly in Africa and the least developed countries;

25. *Further welcomes* the contribution of the International Labour Organization on the implementation of the Summit commitments, particularly relating to its activities in promoting expansion of productive employment and reduction of unemployment as part of promoting social development;

26. *Takes into account* that the Commission for Social Development will examine at its thirty-seventh session, in 1999, the theme "Social services for all", and emphasizes the importance of the continued involvement and support by funds and programmes as well as specialized agencies, notably the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in the promotion and attainment of the Summit commitment of promoting universal and equitable access to quality education, the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and the access of all to primary health care;

27. *Urges* the continued involvement and support by the regional commissions in the promotion of the implementation of the objectives of the Summit at the regional and subregional levels, and reiterates its invitation to the commissions, in accordance with their mandates and in cooperation with the regional intergovernmental organizations and banks, to continue to convene on a biennial basis meetings at a high political level to review the progress made towards implementing the outcome of the Summit, to exchange views, to identify and share best practices and lessons learned and to identify additional initiatives to strengthen implementation;

28. *Welcomes* in this context the convening of subregional meetings by the Economic Commission for Africa in December 1998 and in 1999, and a regional meeting by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in December 1998 to evaluate the follow-up of the Summit in their regions;

The special session of the General Assembly and its preparatory process

29. *Recalls* its resolution 50/161, in which it decided to hold a special session in 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and to consider further actions and initiatives;

30. *Also recalls* its resolution 52/25, in which it decided to establish a Preparatory Committee open to the participation of all States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies, with the participation of observers in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly;

31. *Takes note* of the report and decisions of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives;[9]

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[9] Ibid., *Supplement No. 45* (A/53/45).

32. *Reiterates* that the objectives of the special session will be to reaffirm the Declaration and the Programme of Action agreed at the Summit and not to renegotiate them, to identify progress made and constraints therein, as well as lessons learned, in the implementation of the Declaration and the Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels and to recommend concrete actions and initiatives to further efforts towards full and effective implementation of the Declaration and the Programme of Action;

33. *Recalls* the provisional agenda for the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives as adopted in decision 53/405 of 7 October 1998;

34. *Reaffirms* the need to integrate a gender perspective in all aspects of the preparatory work as well as in the special session;

35. *Takes note* of the recommendation of the Preparatory Committee that the Commission for Social Development, which has primary responsibility for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the Declaration and the Programme of Action, be entrusted with the responsibility of acting as the forum for national reporting, benefiting from the sharing of experiences gained and thus in 1999 and 2000 identifying areas where further initiatives are needed, for consideration by the Preparatory Committee;[10]

36. *Reaffirms* the decision of the Preparatory Committee that its substantive activities should take into account the results of other major United Nations conferences and contributions by other relevant organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system in time for the respective substantive sessions of the Committee;[11]

37. *Invites* all relevant organs, funds and programmes, as well as the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, to contribute to and be actively involved in the preparatory process and the special session by submitting contributions for the overall assessment of the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments as well as by, *inter alia*, submitting proposals for further actions and initiatives;

38. *Invites* the International Labour Organization, which because of its mandate, tripartite structure and expertise has a special role to play in the field of employment and social development, to be actively involved in the preparatory process and the special session, to contribute to the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and to consider further action and initiatives therein;

39. *Invites* Governments to contribute to the Trust Fund for the Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development in order to support the participation of the least developed countries in the work of the Preparatory Committee and the special session, and the work undertaken by the Secretariat in the preparations for the special session;

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[10] Ibid., chap. VI, sect. B, decision 3 (*a*).

[11] Ibid., decision 4.

Arrangements for future sessions of the Preparatory Committee and the special session

40. *Takes note* of the decision of the Preparatory Committee to hold its first substantive session in New York from 17 to 28 May 1999 and its second session, also in New York, from 3 to 14 April 2000;[12]

41. *Decides* that the Preparatory Committee should establish an in-session open-ended working group during the second week of its first substantive session to facilitate consultations on organizational matters related to the special session;

42. *Takes note* of the note by the Secretary-General on the preparations for the special session;[13]

43. *Welcomes* the offer of the Government of Switzerland to convene the special session at the United Nations Office at Geneva;

44. *Decides* that the special session will be held at Geneva from 26 to 30 June 2000;

45. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the implementation of the outcome of the Summit;

46. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development".

62nd plenary meeting
19 November 1998

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[12] Ibid., decision 6 (*b*).

[13] A/53/210.